


# VIZ-IN

Volume 1, No. 8

Free Copy!



**W**elcome to the latest VIZ-IN! We hope you'll like our fresh look and the new columns inside. This issue is dedicated to *Lum* \* Urusei Yatsura, Viz Comics' upcoming release, and as a special feature we're presenting Part 1 of an exclusive personal interview between Seiji Horibuchi of Viz and Rumiko Takahashi, *Lum*'s creator.

*A typical modern romance—she's a little alien, he's a little confused.*

## Let a Little Lum into Your Life

We bet it's been a long time since you read a truly humorous comic. Viz's publication of *Lum* brings you a marvelously funny and whimsical manga that millions of Japanese enjoyed for years.

*Lum* was one of the most popular manga titles in the 1980s in Japan—the collected volumes sold more than 22 million copies—making its creator, Rumiko Takahashi, one of the most successful manga artists ever and one of Japan's wealthiest people. Her other series, *Maison Ikkoku* and *Ranma 1/2*, also met with instant adoration from fans.

Takahashi's success comes from her

development of offbeat characters and unusual story lines, which occasionally draw on themes and characters in Japanese folklore. But even though her settings may be based on everyday Japanese life, the emotions and reactions of her eccentric cast transcend cultural barriers and will be understood everywhere.

*Lum* will be out in May in a deluxe squarebound format as a Viz Select Comic. The series will run for eight installments of complete episodes that introduce the different characters spawned by Takahashi's wild imagination. The black and white comic will have original covers by Takahashi. The price is set at \$2.95 in the United States or \$4.00 in Canada.

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# Dreaming about LUM

**An interview with  
Rumiko Takahashi, Part 1**  
By Seiji Horibuchi

**SH:** The first issue of the English version of *Lum* will come out in May in the United States. How do you feel about this?

**RT:** Well, I wrote *Lum* with contemporary everyday Japanese life in mind—you know, where people live, what they eat, wear, say, and think—so I wonder whether people in a foreign country will understand it. I'm quite curious to see their response.

**SH:** Do you know that you already have a lot of *Lum* fans in the U.S.?

**RT:** Really? I hadn't the slightest idea! That's wonderful! No one's ever told me. It's really very nice.

**SH:** There are many *Lum* fan clubs all over the United States. We are constantly being contacted by those fans—they call us, send us drawings of your characters, all sorts of things. They always want to know when we are going to produce *Lum*.

**RT:** Wait a minute... these are Americans?

**SH:** Yes, they are!

**RT:** Oh. I really didn't know that! Thank you for telling me. Oh, what can I say? I really am quite curious. Given that their world and their perceptions are so different, I wonder what it is that they find interesting. I'd like to ask them.

**SH:** Most of the fans are what they call "Japanimation" fans, animation buffs. I imagine what attracts them initially is the charm of the characters and your drawing style, not the story or the humor.

**RT:** I would really appreciate it if you could arrange some way for me to

receive fan letters from American readers. With translations, of course. (Laughter)

**SH:** Interestingly enough, most *Lum* fans in the United States also follow your other works, even though the themes and settings are so very different. As their creator, why do you think your characters are so popular even outside Japan?

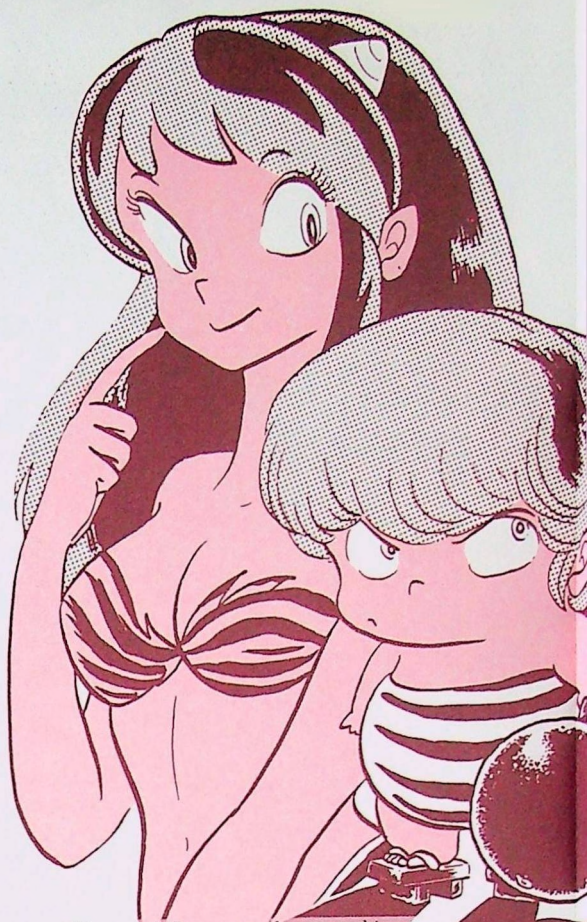
**"It makes me very happy to see people laughing as they read my books."**

**RT:** It's not easy to answer that question. Perhaps American fans like the Asian quality of *Lum*'s character. You know, a cute girl from the Orient. I would say the design of her character and costume is very Asian, even somewhat Chinese... I can sort of understand that this would appeal to Americans, as something exotic.

Americans might have difficulty understanding the settings I use throughout the series because their everyday environment and experiences are so different. I use a lot of Japanese props, anecdotes, characters from old folk tales, and so on. I wonder how they perceive these. I suppose they must find something interesting, or again, exotic.

**SH:** Do you think Americans will understand the humor in your books?

**RT:** Well, again, there are cultural differences. When I see an American comedy, even though the jokes are translated, there is always a moment when I feel puzzled. I think, "Ah, Americans would probably laugh at



this more." I suppose the same thing must happen with my books. It's inevitable! Yet, that doesn't mean my books cannot be enjoyed by English-speaking readers. I feel confident that there is enough substance to them that people from a variety of cultural backgrounds can have a lot of fun reading my stories.

**SH:** Before you started *Lum*, you wrote a short work that won an award. It was similar to *Lum*, science fiction and humor combined.

**RT:** *Lum* was a title I had been dreaming about since I was very young. It really includes everything I wanted to do. I love science fiction because sci-fi has tremendous flexibility. It's true that my way of thinking can be very imaginative. I'm the kind of person who always thinks how wonderful it would be if I could fly, or if I could teleport my body when I am late for an appointment. I adopted the science fiction style for *Lum* because then I could write any way I wanted to, with that special kind of flexibility.

**SH:** What about the humor in *Lum*?

**RT:** I wanted to write slapstick comedy because it's great to have readers respond so immediately. It makes me very happy to see people laughing as they read my books. If a book is serious, I think it's very hard to determine whether someone liked it or not. I'm as simple as a kid. (Laughter)

(Part 2 of this interview will appear in the next issue of VIZ-IN. Translated and edited by the Viz editorial staff.)

## Artist's profile: Rumiko Takahashi

Rumiko Takahashi was born in 1957 in Niigata, Japan. She attended a women's college in Tokyo, where she began studying comics with Kazuo Koike, the writer of *Lone Wolf and Cub*. In 1978, she won a prize in Shogakukan's annual New Comic Artist Contest, and in that same year her *Lum* \* *Urusei Yatsura* began appearing in the weekly manga magazine *Shonen Sunday*. This phenomenally successful series ran for nine years. Takahashi is currently the

most popular comic writer-artist in Japan. Her other titles include *Maison Ikkoku*, *Ranma 1/2*, and *One-Pound Gospel*.



## Sound FX

... A 50-minute animated home video version of *Crying Freeman* was released in Japan in December 1988. It was produced by Toei Doga and directed by Daisuke Nishio. ... A new title by Kazuo Koike (*Lone Wolf and Cub*) and Ryoichi Ikegami (*Mai, the Psychic Girl*, *Crying Freeman*) is being

serialized in *Big Comic: Spirits*. The story takes place in late 19th-century Japan just before the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate and is about a mysterious Jewish cult that had long ago settled in Japan. ... Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma 1/2* #5 released in October 1988 was an instant success, becoming the best-selling comic in Japan. It sold more than

a million copies in less than a month. ... Katsuhiko Otomo, who had been busy directing the *Akira* movie, restarted the comic series in *Young Magazine* in November 1988. It will be the final chapter of *Akira*. ... A home video version of the animated film *Akira* was released in December 1988. Bandai, the distributor of the home video, spent nearly one

million dollars remaking portions of the original movie and remixing the sound. Otomo had requested that the home version be re-produced. Bandai felt confident enough about potential sales to justify the remake. ... According to *Animage*, "*Dragon Ball*," "*Sentoshi (Warrior) Seiya*," and "*The Three Musketeers*" were the most-watched programs





## LUM CAST

### Gerard Jones

Versatile Gerard Jones, 31, is rewriting Satoru Fujii's translations of Rumiko Takahashi's scripts for *Lum*. This is no easy task since much of Takahashi's humor and plots are derived from Japanese customs and folklore. But humor is Jones' forte, and his sensitivity to the Japanese original ensures a respectful adaptation.

Jones said the most challenging aspect of working on *Lum* is "the jokes themselves. *Lum* has a lot of puns and obscure Japanese references. I essentially have to make up new jokes that accomplish the same functions as the original ones.

"For example, the name of the little priest, Cherry, is based on a Japanese pun. I had to substitute a whole new gag to explain Cherry's name in a way that would be clear and amusing to American readers.

"Coming up with the characters' voices is another challenge. Obviously, they are very extravagant characters, but they're also basically appealing. I have to give them accessible speech patterns, make them funny, and still retain their individuality."

Jones' versatility is evident in his other works. He was the rewriter of *Grey* (Viz). He is currently cowriting the successful *Trouble with Girls* (Comico) and is doing *The Score* (Parana Press), *El Diablo* (DC), and some work on *The Shadow* (DC).



during the fall by hardcore animation fans in Japan.



### The Success of Grey Death

Viz's adaptation of *Grey*, Yoshihisa Tagami's hardboiled futuristic tale of a computer-controlled society, has been one of the most popular manga releases distributed in the United States and one of the most successful black and white comics by an

## CRYING FREEMAN

Story by Kazuo Koike (Lone Wolf and Cub). Art by Ryoichi Ikegami (Mai, the Psychic Girl). First serialized in the weekly manga magazine *Big Comic: Spirits* from 1986 to 1988.

Yo Hinomura, a young Japanese potter and martial arts master, is kidnapped by the 108 Dragons, a Chinese crime syndicate. They manipulate Yo through a special acupuncture technique and use him to assassinate their rivals. Yo can't prevent himself from committing their terrible deeds, yet tears stream from his eyes in despair and regret. Egiri, who accidentally witnesses one of his killings, becomes Yo's lover and eventually his wife. Yo ultimately be-

comes the leader of the 108 Dragons, and the series follows its confrontations with various crime, military, and political organizations.

Sexy and violent, *Crying Freeman* was quite popular among adult readers in Japan. Viz is considering this title for U.S. release in graphic novel format.



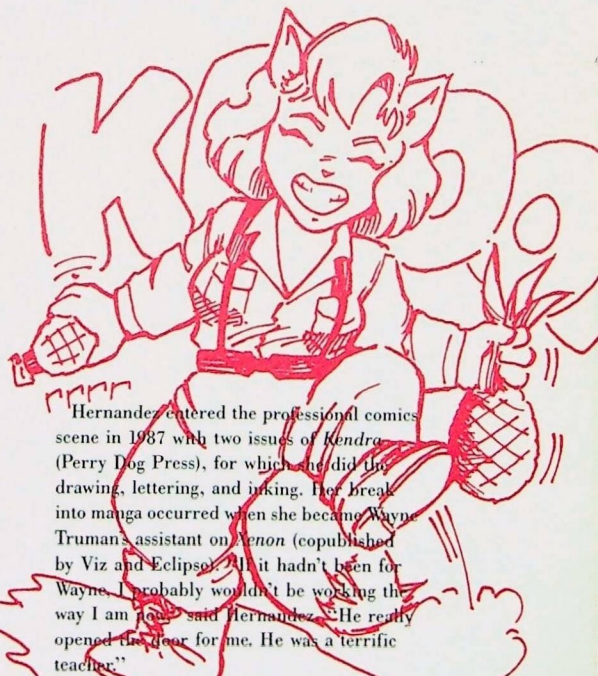
He is contributing editor to *National Lampoon* (look for his upcoming article, "How to Enjoy the Depression of the '90s") and a contributor to Paul Krassner's *Realist*.

Jones coauthored *The Beaver Papers* (1983), parodying the styles of different writers "by showing what might have happened if they'd written episodes for 'Leave It to Beaver,'" and *Comic Book Heroes* (1985). He is currently writing an "irreverent" social history of television sitcoms, tentatively called *The Sugar-Coated Mirror*.

### Lea Hernandez

Lea Hernandez, who will be 25 in March, is *Lum*'s letterer and touchup artist. An up and coming talent in professional comics, and one of the few woman artists or letterers in the industry, Hernandez said she was "surprised and excited" when Viz offered her the work on *Lum*. "*Lum* is something I never expected to happen. It's really great!"

Hernandez knew she wanted to be in comics since she was 12 years old, when she told her mother, "I'm going to work for Marvel." But instead of Marvel, her interests have lead her to manga. "My boyfriend [who's now her husband] gave me Fred Schodt's *Manga! Manga!* on a date six years ago. I spent the whole time with my nose in that book. I told him, 'I don't want to do American comics, I want to do this! I've read the book eight times!'"



Hernandez entered the professional comics scene in 1987 with two issues of *Kendra* (Perry Dog Press), for which she did the drawing, lettering, and inking. Her break into manga occurred when she became Wayne Trumans' assistant on *Venon* (copublished by Viz and Eclipse). "If it hadn't been for Wayne, I probably wouldn't be working the way I am now," said Hernandez. "He really opened the door for me. He was a terrific teacher."

Her first complete solo project was Viz's miniseries *Pineapple Army*. Next spring, she will begin working on *Venus Wars* (Dark Horse and Studio Proteus), another manga adaptation. So the girl who said she wanted to do manga is certainly getting what she wanted!

independent publisher. *Grey* represented Viz's first solo publication and has helped push Viz into seventh place for market share among all comics publishers.

### Nausicaä Rides Again

Part 1 of Viz's publication of Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* ends in May

with Book 7. The first issue of Part 2 is planned for release in August. Concluded in five issues, Part 2 represents as much of the *Nausicaä* story as Miyazaki has completed. But rumors in Japan have it that he might again begin working on his saga of the girl with an unusual destiny. If he does, Viz can publish Part 3!



## FIST OF THE NORTH STAR #2

story by Buronson  
art by Tetsuo Hara  
A VIZ SELECT COMIC  
monthly, b & w, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN

An old man carrying precious seed back to his village is attacked by the vicious Kingsmen gang. Spade, its vengeful leader, challenges Kenshiro with a crossbow, but the master of the sacred Great Bear school literally gives him an eyeful with "The Two-Finger Grasp of Nil Space." Kenshiro demonstrates some other dynamically and graphically violent martial arts techniques in "When Anger Breaks the Sky" and "Fist of Remorse" in this issue.

**Shipping May 2**



## NAUSICAÄ OF THE VALLEY OF WIND

### Part 1, Book 7

by Hayao Miyazaki  
A VIZ SELECT COMIC  
monthly, b & w, 56 pages  
7 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN  
In the final episode of Part 1, a miasma even more deadly than that of the Sea of Corruption almost waylays Nausicaä and Kushana's expedition. Kushana witnesses the destruction of the remnant of her stolen Third Army. Meanwhile, Yupa, Asbel, and Ketcha are rescued from their crashlanding by the mysterious Forest People living in the midst of the Sea of Corruption.

**Shipping May 23**



## MAI, THE PSYCHIC GIRL Volume 2

story by Kazuya Kudo  
art by Ryoichi Ikegami  
A VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL  
bimonthly, b & w, 266 pages  
4 volumes  
\$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN  
Viz presents a deluxe, Japanese-style graphic novel version of the popular manga series. Each volume is in a large (8 1/4" x 6") soft-cover format with a full-color illustrated dust jacket by Ikegami, drawn especially for this reissue. This complete, uncensored release includes pages omitted from the original biweekly issues. Great for collectors and Mai fans, old and new!

**Shipping May 23**



## GREY Book 8

by Yoshihisa Tagami  
A VIZ SELECT COMIC  
monthly, b & w, 72 pages  
9 issues  
\$3.25 USA/\$4.40 CAN  
Grey, Lara, and Shidara flee the ruins of Nagoshi, the Resistance base destroyed by Robert J. Dimitri, only to encounter the monstrous gunships of the City. Reinforced by his new halfling body, Grey survives yet another battle as Lara reveals more of Toy's mysterious and sinister plot!

**Shipping May 23**



## AREA 88 #42

by Kaoru Shintani  
monthly, b & w, 32 pages  
\$2.00 USA/\$2.75 CAN  
All missions are suspended when unusual weather hits the Asran desert. Saki and Mick talk politics while the enemy's land carrier prepares for an attack on Area 88. The mood of the mercenaries momentarily softens as they listen to the "Song of a Fallen Angel."

**Shipping May 2**



## LUM \* URUSEI YATSURA #1

by Rumiko Takahashi  
A VIZ SELECT COMIC  
monthly, b & w, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN  
One of Japan's most popular and successful manga finally appears in an English adaptation. Viz Comics introduces Takahashi's truly unique and humorous comic featuring amusing stories and a wide variety of eccentric characters, guaranteed to make you laugh out loud!

Viz's premiere issue of Lum contains two separate episodes. In a "A Good Catch," that cute alien, Lum, enters Ataru's life in a game of tag. The winner's prize? The earth! In "Poor Little Devil," Ataru's "bad luck" continues when a rather odd and irate little demon leaps out of a mirror, causing further chaos in the Moroboshi household! Demons, aliens, watermelons... it's all there in Lum!

**Shipping May 2**



## VIZ-IN News Magazine

\$4.00 per bundle of 100  
Read about new Viz releases, anime, writers, artists, everything that's happening in the manga scene in Japan and North America. Enjoy one of the highest-quality comics newsletters in the industry.

**Shipping May 16**

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Design & Layout/Hidemi Sahara

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## GREY: DIGITAL TARGET

Available only from Viz Comics  
\$124.95 includes postage and handling  
Original Japanese version  
80 minutes  
"Grey: Digital Target" is the video of the successful animation film based on the comic Grey. It's a must for diehard Grey and anime fans.



Send money order or cashier's check in U.S. dollars made payable to Viz Comics to: GREY: DIGITAL TARGET  
Viz Comics  
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Specify VHS or BETA.  
Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.